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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000041

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PARM PREL UNSC IR LO

SUBJECT: SLOVAKS AGREE ON IMPORTANCE OF PUTTING REAL PRESSURE ON IRAN

REF: STATE 9124

CLASSIFIED BY: Keith A. Eddins, CDA, EXEC, State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Charge d'affaires made reftel demarche to Slovak MFA Political Director Slobodnik on January 29. Slobodnik appreciated the U.S. points, noting that they reinforced Under Secretary Burns' recent session with EU political directors in Spain. Slobodnik said the Slovaks fully understood that the Iranians had not responded in any meaningful way to the international community's repeated efforts to engage, particularly on the Tehran Research Reactor and Iran's clandestine nuclear program. He welcomed the fact that the U.S. was still open to an Iranian response, but acknowledged that the time was rapidly drawing near when additional pressure would be essential. He said Slovakia favors robust new sanctions, and will not be holding the EU back as it considers its approach (in consultation with the U.S.).

¶2. (C) Given Slovakia's ongoing discussions with EU partners, the MFA was already considering next steps and potential new elements of a strengthened sanctions regime. Based on reporting from the Slovak embassy in Tehran, Slobodnik said that he could envision two key elements of any new sanctions regime being:

-- a 'psychological component' (to include travel restrictions on prominent Iranians), that made it absolutely clear to the Iranian public that their country is not a normal member of the world community; and

-- a renewed focus on securing the Iranian-Turkish border and routes through the Gulf States that Iran currently uses to evade sanctions.

On the later point, Slobodnik said the U.S. would have to use all the influence it could on Turkey to tighten up the border regime.

¶3. (C) Charge emphasized to Slobodnik the importance of comprehensively and aggressively enforcing all existing sanctions on Iran, noting that a November visit to Slovakia by an Iranian trade delegation had almost produced a new Slovak-Iranian economic cooperation agreement (septel). While we appreciated the MFA stepping in at the last moment and stopping the Ministry of Economics from signing such an agreement, we all needed to make sure that every element within our governments fully understood the need to present a united front to the Iranians. Slobodnik agreed and said the MFA was working the issue within the Slovak government to prevent any

recurrence.

¶4. (C) Finally, following up on comments Foreign Minister Lajcak had made to DAS Quanrud in November about Austria, Charge asked how the Slovaks currently perceived Vienna's position on sanctions within the EU. Slobodnik said that the Austrians had their reasons for being cautious (e.g., significant Iranian oil contracts), but seemed to be coming around to position more akin to the majority of EU member states. Charge urged Slobodnik (and Lajcak) to use their regular contacts with their Austrian neighbors to make clear the need to increase pressure on Iran in a coordinated, effective manner. Slobodnik said he would do so.

EDDINS